

cently examined this bird and found it to be the common Oven-bird (*S. aurocapillus*).

It is only just to Professor Hamlin to state that he should not be held responsible for the error, as he sent a large number of alcoholic specimens to the Cambridge Museum at that time, and after they had been identified, the list of names (among which was (*Sciurus ludovicianus*)) was returned to him and by him incorporated in his paper. Nor was the mistake Mr. Allen's, as he was not connected with the Museum until several years later.

This leaves *Sciurus ludovicianus* with but a single record for the State of Maine.—ARTHUR P. CHADBOURNE. *Cambridge, Mass.*

Changes in the Plumage of *Geothlypis trichas*.—In the interesting review in the October 'Auk' (1885), of the tenth volume of the British Museum Catalogue of Birds, Mr. Allen very appropriately takes occasion to correct the gross error, into which most of the books have fallen, in regard to the winter plumage of the males of so common and extensively distributed a species as *Geothlypis trichas*. The error in question is a statement to the effect that in winter the adult male loses the conspicuous black and ashy markings about the head, and takes on the uniform olivaceous and brownish colors of the upper parts of the female. In making this correction, however, Mr. Allen, I believe, does not go far enough, for according to my observations the males not only never assume the plumage of the female after having once attained the masculine livery, but young birds moult directly into a plumage approaching that of the adult male (which will be indicated in detail farther on), when they begin in August to shed the well-known fluffy 'first plumage,' with its greenish and ochreish tints, brownish wing-coverts, etc.

There are, Mr. Allen states, instances in which the young male has been taken in winter in the female plumage, but these, I think, should be regarded as exceptional. I have examined very carefully the two large series of this bird (including Mr. Brewster's *occidentalis*, which, for the purpose we have in hand, may be 'lumped' with *trichas*) contained in the collection of the National Museum, and in that of Mr. Henshaw, besides ten or a dozen other specimens, amounting altogether to 144 individuals, and have failed to find a single winter male without the adult black and ashy markings. But I did find three spring males with these characters so imperfectly developed as to indicate, probably, that the birds had passed the preceding winter in the plumage of the female.

The changes in plumage when the young male begins his first moult, which occurs in August, in the latitude of Washington, may be briefly summarized as follows:—The feathers of the head and middle of the throat appear to be the first that are lost. The latter are replaced by yellow ones (not so bright, however, as in the adult), which at first are to be seen in linear blotches. Those of the head give place to a new set, of a fine chocolate brown color, shading off into olivaceous towards the nape in most birds, in some, however, extending over almost the whole of the

upper parts. Before these two changes are completed, the first black feathers begin to show themselves in the maxillary region, and they gradually spread into an irregularly shaped patch on the sides of the head and neck. Nearly all of these black feathers are tipped with ash, the amount of which appears to vary with the individual. At this stage the black is quite similar to that which adorns the breast of *G. philadelphia*; and in this plumage the bird is the one described by Audubon (Orn. Biog., I, 1832, 124, pl. 24) as *Sylvia roscoe*, and is very common during the latter part of August and in September. The next step in this somewhat protracted change begins in September, when the black feathers make their appearance on the forehead at the base of the upper mandible, whence they continue to extend until the area usually covered with black is attained: and the border of hoary ash now appears sharply defined against the black mask and the greenish olive and brown of the rest of the upper parts. The ashy tips to the black feathers have now entirely disappeared. A New Orleans specimen (No. 90.665) taken November 22, undoubtedly a young bird of the year, illustrates this phase very perfectly. No. 2782, (Coll. H. W. H.), collected November 1, shows a stage preceding the last: the soft chocolate brown covers the whole back of the head, and the ashy band, which seems to be a very variable character, is very much restricted.

It may be well to state that of the 144 specimens examined of *trichas* and *occidentalis*, 24 of them were young August and autumnal males in various transitional stages of plumage, and there are none of them taken later than August 20 which do not show some traces of the changes above indicated. There is another peculiarity of young fall birds, female as well as male, which seems to be very constant, first pointed out, I believe, by Professor Baird (Rev. Am. Bds. 1864, 221), namely, the much lighter color of the bill as compared with spring birds.

During the past summer and autumn, the writer enjoyed excellent facilities for observing the Yellow-throat in his native haunts. A favorite collecting ground was an old forest-surrounded field, near Ellicott City, Md., through the centre of which ran a brook of considerable size, whose banks were fringed with such a dense and luxuriant growth of bushes and tangled vines as to meet over the middle of the stream, forming, as any 'bird-man' knows, a paradise for Yellow-throats, Chats, and other thicket-loving species. On three or four different occasions during the latter part of August I penetrated this tunnel of verdure, and by employing the well-known 'screeching' device—making a noise-machine out of the back of the hand and the lips—attracted the usual mob of curious, scolding, and anxious little birds. The young Yellow-throats were particularly numerous in these excited assemblages, and once I counted seven young males with the incipient black masks, and two young females in sight at the same time, the most distant of them not twenty feet from the spot where I was sitting. During the following month (September), I found the young males in the transitional plumage quite common in Kentucky, where I collected a good deal.

There is one specimen in the National Museum collection that doubtless deserves special mention in this connection. The label thereof reads as follows :

“66,643. *Geothlypis trichas* ♂ ad. No. 104. Cleveland, Ohio, May 11, 1874. J. S. Newberry, M. D. Large testicles stated to have been found. Given to Smithsonian Institution by E. Coues.”

Taken by itself the label presents nothing remarkable, but tied to the leg of this particular bird it affords us one of those by no means uncommon ornithological puzzles, which, in the language of Dundreary, “no fellow can find out.” The bird is in the full spring plumage of the *female*, without a single trace of black or ash about the head.—CHARLES WICKLIFFE BECKHAM, *Washington, D. C.*

Unseasonable Birds on Long Island.—1. *Galeoscoptes carolinensis*.—On December 30, 1882, while passing along one of the streets of our village—Fort Hamilton—my attention was arrested by a bird note, familiar yet strangely out of place at that season—none other than the characteristic cry of the Catbird. I caught sight of the bird a moment later, hopping about in the branches of a lilac bush in a private yard, not a dozen feet from me, so that there was no error in the identification.

2. *Oidema perspicillata*.—During a week's stay at Montauk Point, from July 15 to July 21, 1883, I saw on several occasions a flock of ‘Sea Coots’ floating on the ocean about 250 or 300 yards from shore. To which of the three species they belonged I could not tell. On June 12, 1884, I saw a flock of at least fifty ‘Sea Coots’ in the Lower New York Bay, off Coney Island, but the distance was too great to determine the species; but on the 20th of the same month, while sailing in Gravesend Bay, about two miles below Fort Hamilton, we came upon three individuals of *O. perspicillata*. We ran down to within 20 yards of them before they took wing, but as the gun had been left at home, in deference to the ladies, I was unable to secure them.

3. *Harelda glacialis*.—While yatching in North Oyster Bay, Long Island Sound, on July 12, 1884, I shot a fine male ‘Old Wife.’ The bird was apparently well and uninjured, and was swimming about in a lively manner as we approached. My first shot either missed or only wounded it slightly, for it instantly rose and was flying off rapidly when I killed it with my second barrel. I skinned it, and could not find any marks of old wounds or other injuries. It was in full plumage and differed from the adults usually taken in this latitude by the greater amount of orange brown on the back and scapulars. The dark zone on the breast was also of a lighter shade than usual.—DE L. BERIER, 52 Broadway, New York City.

Two Additions to the Texas Avi-fauna.—I have taken in Cook County, Texas, the following : *Syrnium nebulosum alleni*, *Turdus fuscescens salicicola*.—G. S. RAGSDALE, *Gainsville, Texas*.